



# Representative Jim Buck

24TH DISTRICT



## 1998 Session Report

*Serving Clallam • Jefferson • and Grays Harbor counties*

Dear Friends,

The 1998 legislative session got underway Jan. 12 and we are off to a running start on an ambitious agenda. This newsletter outlines many of the major issues that will be addressed during the scheduled 60 days that we're working in Olympia.

Since 1995, Republicans in the Legislature have earned a solid record of achievement – successfully enacting fundamental reforms in the way government operates and treats the citizens of our state. Our priorities this year reflect our continuing commitment to making government more accountable and responsive to the people it serves.

Among our top agenda items this year:

- **Meaningful and effective changes in the state's education system**
- **Meeting transportation needs**
- **Increasing the safety and security of our homes and neighborhoods**
- **Enacting tough new laws to crack down on drunk drivers**
- **Holding the line on state spending**
- **Protecting wild fish, but keep people fishing**

These are some of our goals for the 1998 session, sensible priorities that will build on a three-year foundation of accomplishment in serving the best interests of the people of Washington state.

Sincerely,

Rep. Jim Buck  
Chairman, Natural Resources Committee



## 1998 legislative calendar

**Monday, Jan. 12** — First day of session

**Friday, Feb. 6** — Deadline for bills to be passed out of House committees

**Tuesday, Feb. 10** — Deadline for bills to clear House fiscal committees

**Tuesday, Feb. 17** — Deadline for House passage of bills originating in the House

**Friday, Feb. 27** — Deadline for passage of Senate bills by House committees

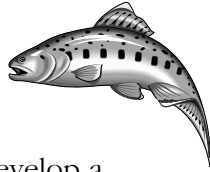
**Monday, March 2** — Deadline to pass Senate bills out of House fiscal committees

**Friday, March 6** — Deadline to pass all bills out of both House and Senate chambers (5 p.m.)

**Thursday, March 12** — Session adjourns (sine die)



### Buck challenges salmon recovery policy



In 1993, the Legislature directed the Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a statewide wild salmon recovery plan. On Dec. 5, 1997, after more than four years of public hearings, meetings and negotiations, the state Fish and Wildlife Commission voted unanimously to adopt a controversial Wild Salmonid Policy (WSP) to protect and restore Washington's dwindling stocks of wild salmon. Among its components the new policy would reduce harvests, curtail hatchery production, and require increased protection of salmon habitat.

There is no question that decisive action is imperative if we are to end 20 years of conflict growing out of the 1974 Boldt decision and head off federal control of salmon through the Endangered Species Act. Last August, the federal government listed as endangered the wild steelhead runs in the upper Columbia River basin in Eastern Washington. The National Marine Fisheries Service also listed as threatened the Snake River steelhead run. The state may face many more listings of wild fish under the Endangered Species Act, including the Puget Sound chinook salmon, coho and cutthroat in southwest Washington, and chum in the lower Columbia River and central Puget Sound areas.

While we all agree on the seriousness of the crisis and the threat of federal interference in local fish-protection efforts, the policy adopted by the commission is significantly flawed. For example, Washington has more hatcheries than any other state, and the Legislature's mandate to the department in 1993 specified "full utilization of salmon-rearing facilities is necessary to enhance commercial and recreational fisheries." However, the WSP approved by the commission would curtail hatchery production without legislative authority.

I met with commission members hours before they voted on the proposal and pointed out to them that adopting the plan would also violate a requirement under the Columbia River Compact to work with Oregon in developing the policy. The WSP also ignores a 1985 court order calling for a maximum sustained harvest in Puget Sound.

For these reasons and others, it appears that implementation of some of the policies in the plan

would be inconsistent with existing state and federal law. On Dec. 16, 1997, I requested an analysis of the Wild Salmonid Policy by the Legislature's Joint Administrative Rules Review Committee (JARRC) to ensure that the WSP and any new rules adopted with it reflect the intent of the Legislature.

### Buck plan would strengthen salmon restoration effort

As the Fish and Wildlife Commission prepared its salmon policy, I worked during the interim to draft my own blueprint to protect and revitalize our vanishing wild-salmon populations for future generations. The framework of the **Buck Plan** would:

- **Hold the line on what we have. Use the nation's most extensive salmon hatchery production system to augment wild-salmon recovery efforts.**
- **Concentrate on restoration of weak stocks. Focus the heaviest restoration efforts on the weakest runs — those most in danger of an endangered species listing.**
- **Branch to progressively stronger areas. As the weaker runs rebuild to a healthy salmon resource, emphasis would be shifted to runs that need the least help.**
- **Build and sustain stocks on a long-term basis. Restoring salmon runs must be viewed as a long-term commitment. For example, a summer chum-restoration plan for Hood Canal extends 10 years into the next century.**

**The Buck Plan** can be reviewed in detail at the 24th District Web site:

<http://www.snickerdoodles.com/jimbuck/index.html>

### Salmon task force

Last fall, as a response to the growing concern about the Wild Salmonid Policy and listings of wild fish under the Endangered Species Act, we formed the bipartisan Legislative Task Force on Salmon Restoration. The 25-member panel has been holding hearings around the state and developing restoration strategies which will be considered this session by the

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Legislature. Our intention is not to diminish the well-intentioned goals of the Wild Salmonid Policy, but to refine and strengthen the proposal with collaborative improvements that will produce a more viable and comprehensive plan of action.

## Legislature keeps focus on accountability, responsiveness

Since 1995, Republicans in the Legislature have aggressively and effectively worked to achieve fundamental reforms in the way government operates. During this legislative session, we will pursue further measures to continue that record of progress. Here is an overview of a few of our top priority issues:

### • Improving transportation

A long-range plan to pay for needed highway repairs and improvements has been drafted that we believe can meet our transportation needs without an increase in the state gas tax and without altering the spending limit imposed by Initiative 601. Cutting waste and utilizing existing tax revenues are among the key components of the proposal. We are also looking at shifting revenue from the motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) to the transportation fund. With a projected budget surplus of over \$850 million, the Legislature should not be asking taxpayers for more money. We are confident that a funding solution can be achieved

through responsible changes and reasonable budget measures that do not impose a new or increased tax burden on the people of Washington.

### • Crime

We will take steps to increase the safety of our streets and the security of our homes and neighborhoods, including doing a better job of managing, monitoring and controlling offenders who are in juvenile group homes, halfway houses or other non-secure facilities.

### • Targeting drunk drivers

Over 300 men, women and children were killed in Washington state last year as a result of drunk-driving incidents. House and Senate Republicans have proposed a broad package of legislation to stiffen penalties on drunk drivers. The centerpiece of the list is a proposal to lower the state's legal blood-alcohol level from .10 to .08 percent. Other elements would triple fines and jail time for drunk driving, especially repeat offenders, and authorize impoundment or forfeiture of vehicles.

### • Education

Legislation has been prepared to achieve meaningful and effective improvements in our state's education system, including reducing bureaucracy, improving the teaching of basic education, increasing discipline, ensuring a safe learning environment, and promoting parental involvement in their local schools.

### • Holding the line on spending

A supplemental budget will be crafted during the next 60 days to fine-tune the two-year operating budget that was adopted during the 1997 session. With a projected surplus of \$861 million, there will be enormous pressure brought to bear on the budget writers for new programs and new spending, but there is strong sentiment to keep a very tight rein on spending



*Peninsula-area constituents meet with Rep. Buck in Olympia to discuss 24th District issues.*



## Rep. Jim Buck • Serving the 24th District

and to keep at least \$500 million in reserve to protect taxpayers against any future economic downturn. Not only is the state enjoying a strong economy, but the fiscal responsibility shown by the Legislature during the last three years and the limits established by Initiative 601 have also helped Washington gain the strongest bond rating in state history.

### *A personal note*

As many of you know, I underwent surgery Dec. 10 to repair a chronic (and painful) hiatal hernia condition. The operation had been scheduled many weeks in advance and was not an emergency medical procedure. Everything went precisely as planned and I spent most of December convalescing at home. During that time I received many calls, cards and letters expressing support and encouragement. The concern and kindness in those messages was deeply appreciated. Be assured that my recuperation was successful, my doctor's given me a clean bill of health, and I'm happy to be back at work serving the people of the 24th District.

### Call me if you need help

Solving problems is a key part of my role as your legislator. I'm here to serve you as well as represent you, so if you are having a problem, particularly in dealing with state government, please let me know.

**Jim Buck • State Representative**  
**(360) 786-7916**

**Toll-free legislative hotline:**  
**1-800-562-6000**

### ELECTION-YEAR MAIL RESTRICTIONS

As your state representative, I make every effort to keep you informed on what is happening in Olympia. However, this is an election year, and under the provisions of Initiative 134, I may send only two mailings during 1998, this newsletter being the first. The law states:

*During the 12-month period preceding the expiration of a state legislator's term of office, no incumbent may mail at public expense a letter, newsletter, brochure, or other piece of literature that is not in direct response to a constituent's request for a response or for information. However, one mailing mailed within 30 days after the start of a regular legislative session and one within 60 days after the end of a regular session of identical newsletters to constituents are permitted.*

The initiative does allow me to respond to your direct request for information, but mailings such as the bi-weekly Olympia Report are not allowed. I encourage you to write or call me (360-786-7916) whenever you have a question, concern or an idea to share on legislation or other issues.

P.O. Box 40600  
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600

**Jim Buck**  
*Representative*



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